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14 October 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT : Possible Special Estimate on Communist Reactions to
a Unilateral ROK Resumption of Hostilities in Korea 1

Attachment : Proposed Questions to be Covered by Special Estimate
on Communist Reactions

1. SE-48 estimates that the ROK has the capability to initiate courses of armed action which would disrupt the armistice and might lead to the resumption of full-scale hostilities in Korea, that there are enough ROK leaders who would obey any orders President Rhee might issue to enable him to initiate unilateral military action, and that under certain circumstances Rhee would probably take such action. The question of possible Communist reactions to a unilateral ROK attack was not within the scope of SE-48 and was discussed only in the context that Rhee's estimate of probable Communist reactions would be one of the considerations influencing his decision whether or not to carry out his threats to resume hostilities.

2. An estimate on probable Communist reactions to various ROK courses of action would be difficult to define and to prepare. If, however, the Planning Board desires an intelligence study on this general question, we suggest that the estimate concern itself principally with the attached questions. These questions on our part are

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tentative and would require further Planning Board definition. In the event that an estimate is requested, we further suggest, because of the unique nature of such a paper, that the usual contribution procedures be waived and that the Board of National Estimates be instructed to prepare a draft estimate for agency consideration after informal consultation with agency representatives.

Sherman Kent
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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**PROPOSED QUESTIONS TO BE COVERED BY A SPECIAL
ESTIMATE ON PROBABLE COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO A UNILATERAL
ROK RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES IN KOREA**

ASSUMPTION

In no event will the US willingly support a unilateral ROK attack, but the US will take the necessary steps to insure the security of its forces.

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS TO BE COVERED

1. What would be the probable initial and subsequent Communist military and political reactions to a major ROK attack (1 or more divisions) in the event that the US disavowed the ROK action, gave assurances to the Communists that the US would not support the ROK attack in any way, and:

- a. Issued a warning that US forces would remain in and defend, if necessary, their existing positions; or**
- b. Issued a warning that US forces would remain in and defend, if necessary, their existing positions, and in addition, actively sought to halt the ROK attack**

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by employing any measures considered necessary by the US, including the deposition of President Rhee and his principal lieutenants; or

c. Began a general withdrawal of US forces from Korea?

2. How would the above Communist reactions differ:

a. If the ROK attack were limited in size (less than one division)?

b. If the US had announced prior to the ROK attack that under no circumstances would the US support any unilateral attack by the ROK?

c. If the US had announced prior to the ROK attack that the US would withdraw its forces from Korea in the event of a unilateral ROK attack?

d. If the US had announced prior to the ROK attack that the US would take any measures considered necessary by the US to halt an ROK attack once undertaken?

3. How would Communist military and political reactions be affected by the military actions taken in Korea and the political

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actions taken elsewhere by UN members, other than the US, with military forces in Korea?

4. How would Communist military and political reactions be affected by the status of the political conference at that time?

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